



STATE OF WASHINGTON
**BOARD OF REGISTRATION FOR
PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS AND LAND SURVEYORS**

Board Staff (360) 664-1575 P.O. BOX 9025 (Correspondence) • P.O. BOX 9048 (Remittance)
Fax (360) 664-2551 OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON 98507

September 5, 2003

Licensed Professional Engineer
WSDOT
Olympia WA 98504

Re: Survey Monument Destruction

Dear Sir or Madam:

Citizens of Washington State have invested in property boundaries and survey monuments since before Statehood. These monuments are not only important to delineate public and private ownership; they are critical. However, property corners and survey monuments are often endangered, and in many cases destroyed, by road and utility construction and maintenance. In 1969 **RCW 58.24.040 (8)** initiated a process to protect these monument assets and responsibility was assigned to a variety of governmental and professional people. Employees of government agencies responsible for the work must take the lead in following this law and thereby protect these monuments. Each agency should adopt as their "best practice" a monument protection plan, which follows the temporary "monument removal permit process" outlined in Chapter 332-120 WAC. Noncompliance by Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors is considered a violation of law to be managed by the Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors. Anyone performing construction or maintenance activities should consider the following:

1. No survey monument shall be removed or destroyed (*the physical disturbance or covering of a monument such that the survey point is no longer visible or readily accessible*) before a permit is obtained from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). WAC 332-120-030(2) states "It shall be the responsibility of the governmental agency or others performing construction work or other activity (including road or street resurfacing projects) to adequately search the records and the physical area of the proposed construction work or other activity for the purpose of locating and referencing any known or existing survey monuments." (RCW 58.09.130).
2. Any person, corporation, association, department, or subdivision of the state, county or municipality responsible for an activity that may cause a survey monument to be removed or destroyed shall be responsible for ensuring that the original survey point is perpetuated. (WAC 332-120-030(2))
3. Survey monuments are those monuments marking local control points, geodetic control points, and land boundary survey corners. (WAC 332-120-030(3))

When a monument must be removed during an activity that might disturb or destroy it, a licensed Engineer or Land Surveyor must complete, sign, seal and then file a permit with the DNR. If many monuments are in danger along a proposed construction route, one permit can be issued for the entire project with location and description details outlined for each monument. The permit will alert others that may encounter the construction or maintenance project and location information will be protected until a new monument is placed. In most cases, ***an agency official must be in responsible charge of protecting monuments during maintenance and construction activities within their jurisdiction.***

The DNR contact person is Ted Smith at 360-902-1194 or by e-mail to ted.smith@wadnr.gov and the link to the permit to temporarily remove monuments is <http://www.dnr.wa.gov/htdocs/plso/download.htm>. The form can be sent by e-mail or USPS to PO Box 47060, Olympia, WA 98504-7060.

The goal of this program is to protect monuments that control vertical and horizontal positions and is not about processing permits. Permits allow monument protection monitoring. A recent report prepared by DNR indicates that County and City governments are seeking very few permits.

Since 1972 only 512 permits or 17 permits per year statewide have been issued. Cities have requested 114 permits and Counties 398 permits. It is not surprising that small cities would have time gaps between permits, but some large cities have not requested a permit for over 20 years. A couple of the state's largest cities have requested fewer than five permits annually. Counties are not much different and only Yakima County appears to consistently request permits. Local governmental agencies managing the most populated cities and counties appear to ignore the requirement to manage the temporary monument removal process entirely.

Most of the roads and utilities in Washington are maintained by local government and often run along the margins of private property parcels. This results in a vast amount of monument disturbance that will eventually be paid for by private citizens. ***As public officials and especially as Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors, it is your duty to protect this resource and follow the permit process closely.***

The Board intends to take aggressive action in relation to complaints relating to Licensee's failure to follow the Laws and Rules as they apply to the temporary removal or destruction of any section corner or any other land boundary mark or monument. This program will continue to be monitored by the Department of Natural Resources and reports will be shared with the Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors. It is expected to see every County and most cities filing permits in the future.

Sincerely,



Deputy Executive Director